



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
National Oceanic Atmospheric Administration
National Marine Fisheries Service
P.O. Box 21668
Juneau, Alaska 99802-1668

January 12, 2018

Dr. Timothy Loher
International Pacific Halibut
Commission 2320 West Commodore
Way, Suite 300
Seattle, WA 98199

Re: Exempted Fishing Permit No. 2018-02

Dear Dr. Loher:

We have approved your application for exempted fishing permit (EFP) 2018-02 to collect biological samples from incidentally caught Pacific halibut in the Aleutian Islands Pacific cod hook-and-line fishery. This permit allows exemptions from certain regulations under 50 CFR 679 to facilitate biological sampling of halibut in an effort to inform the genetic stock structure of Pacific halibut population in the western Aleutian Islands. This study is supported by the North Pacific Fishery Management Council and the International Pacific Halibut Commission.

Enclosed is a copy of EFP 2018-02. A copy of this EFP must be on board the permitted vessels when fishing under the EFP. The permit holder and permitted vessel operators must comply with all provisions of 50 CFR 679, except as provided in the terms and conditions of the EFP. If you have any questions regarding this permit, please contact Bridget Mansfield of the Sustainable Fisheries Division at (907) 586-7642 or email at Bridget.Mansfield@noaa.gov.

Sincerely,

James W. Balsiger, Ph.D.
Administrator, Alaska Region

Enclosure



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GAberle 12/4/2017

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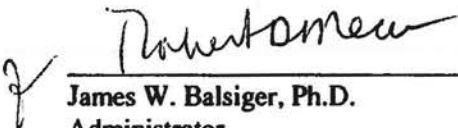
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ALEUTIAN ISLANDS STATISTICAL AREA 542, 543
GROUNDFISH FISHERY
EXEMPTED FISHING PERMIT
AUTHORITY: 50 CFR 600.745(b) AND 50 CFR 679.6

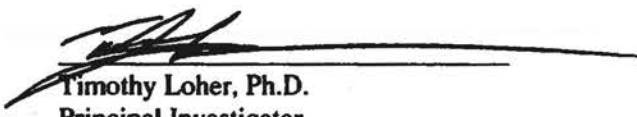
PERMIT #2018-02

The Administrator, Alaska Region, (Regional Administrator), National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), hereby authorizes a hook-and-line vessel participating in the 2018 Aleutian Islands Pacific federal cod fishery to conduct experimental fishing that will provide information on Pacific halibut genetic stock structure. This exempted fishing permit (EFP) describes exemptions to regulations and other requirements that are necessary to facilitate the project. The permit holders and the owner and operator of the participating vessel must comply with the EFP terms, and unless otherwise provided in this permit, the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act, and 50 CFR parts 600 and 679.

This permit is valid and in effect when signed by both the Regional Administrator and participating permit holders. This permit is valid through March 31, 2018. If experimental fishing concludes before the expiration date, the Principal Investigator may terminate the permit prior to the expiration date by notifying Bridget Mansfield (907) 586-7642, NMFS Alaska Regional Office. This permit may be revoked, modified, or suspended under the permit's terms, by the Regional Administrator, or by regulatory action under 50 CFR 679, 50 CFR 600.745, or 15 CFR part 904.


James W. Balsiger, Ph.D.
Administrator,
Alaska Region, NMFS

1-12-18
Date Signed


Timothy Loher, Ph.D.
Principal Investigator,
International Pacific Halibut Commission

11 January 2018
Date Signed

**ALEUTIAN ISLANDS
GROUNDFISH FISHERY
EXEMPTED FISHING PERMIT 2018-02
PERMIT HOLDER SIGNATURE PAGE**


Permit Holder Signature

Timothy Loher
Permit Holder Printed Name

International Pacific Halibut Commission
Permit Holder Company/Affiliation

11 January 2018
Date Signed

**ALEUTIAN ISLANDS
GROUNDFISH FISHERY
EXEMPTED FISHING PERMIT #18-02
TERMS AND CONDITIONS**

AUTHORITY: 50 CFR 600.745(b) AND 50 CFR 679.6

**BIOLOGICAL SAMPLING OF INCIDENTALLY-CAUGHT HALIBUT IN THE ALEUTIAN
ISLANDS PACIFIC COD HOOK-AND-LINE FISHERY**

- A. Permit Holders**
Timothy Loher, Ph.D.
International Pacific Halibut Commission (IPHC)
2320 West Commodore Way, Suite 300
Seattle, WA 98199
(206) 552-7674
- B. Principal Investigator (PI).** The PI, Dr. Timothy Loher, will coordinate with the vessel operator and crew to provide sampling equipment, data sheets, and instructions to vessel crew responsible for collecting and providing to the IPHC, Pacific halibut tissue samples under this EFP.
- C. Designated Vessel.** A single vessel using hook-and-line gear will be designated to conduct the sampling for this EFP. Up to one hundred halibut may be sampled over multiple trips in one fishing season. In addition to the EFP, the owner and operator of the designated vessel will be required to hold all permits and License Limitation Program endorsements otherwise authorizing participation in the Aleutian Islands Pacific cod hook-and-line fishery.
1. A permit holder will submit to NMFS a completed and signed Vessel Data Sheet (see Appendix A) for the designated vessel no later than three business days prior to the commencement of the exempted fishing authorized by this permit. The Vessel Data Sheet includes the following information:
 - a. Name of managing company
 - b. Vessel name(s)
 - c. Federal permit number and USCG registration number
 - d. Name, address, telephone number, and email of owner
 - e. Vessel length and tonnage (gross)
 - f. Vessel type
 - g. Vessel homeport
 - h. Name of designated representative
 - i. Contact information for designated representative
 - j. Signature of owner or designated representative
 2. If the designated vessel is unable to complete the EFP fieldwork (e.g., due to a mechanical breakdown), a permit holder will inform NMFS and submit the required information for a replacement vessel per the designation and notification instructions in sections C and D of this EFP.

3. A copy of this EFP must be on board the designated vessel when EFP fishing.

D. Notification of Exempted Fishing. The permit holder must notify NMFS Alaska Regional Office (Bridget.Mansfield@noaa.gov), the NOAA Office of Law Enforcement (NOAA OLE) (Nathan.Lagerwey@noaa.gov and Will.Ellis@noaa.gov), and the NMFS Alaska Fishery Science Center, North Pacific Observer Program (Observer Program) (Brian.Mason@noaa.gov) by email at least 24 hours before the designated vessel embarks on an EFP fishing trip. The PI must notify NMFS, NOAA OLE, and the Observer Program via the same email addresses, within 24 hours of the end of fishing under this EFP.

E. Area of Exempted Fishing. Exempted fishing under this permit is authorized in the Aleutian Islands subarea in NMFS Statistical Areas 542 and 543 (see Figure 1 to § 679).

F. Halibut tissue sampling.

1. Per standard Observer Program sampling protocol, the NMFS-certified observer (observer) will request vessel crew to bring a halibut occurring in the randomly-selected sample onboard for injury assessment.
2. Per standard Observer Program sampling protocol, the selected halibut will be released from the hook onboard the vessel by the vessel crew per their usual release technique, such that the injury assessment reflects normal crew handling.
3. Per standard Observer Program sampling protocol, the observer will measure the sampled halibut fork length (length) and record the injury assessment.
4. The observer will verbally notify the vessel crew of the halibut length measurement from item F3.
5. The vessel crew will record the fork length measurement provided by the observer in item F4 on the IPHC data form. The vessel crew will assign to each halibut measured, a unique identifier number that matches the unique identifier number on the pre-labeled tissue sample vial for that halibut. In this way, the recorded length will be matched with the tissue sample taken from the same halibut. The vessel crew will not record the injury assignment from item F3.
6. A vessel crew member will collect a small tissue sample from the selected halibut and preserve the sample per instructions provided by the PI. The tissue will be stored in a sample vial provided by the IPHC and pre-labeled with the unique identifier number to match the halibut length measurement recorded on the IPHC data form.
7. Immediately following the tissue sample collection, the halibut will be returned to sea with a minimum of injury; the observer and vessel crew will determine who will conduct the release at the time of the release.

G. Exemptions from Federal Regulations. The owner, operator, and crew of the designated vessel must comply with all requirements of 50 CFR part 679 regulations applicable to vessels participating in hook-and-line fisheries targeting Pacific cod in the Aleutian Islands, with the exception of the exemption listed below. These exemptions apply only to the biological sampling of Pacific halibut during the effective period of the EFP.

Immediate Return of Prohibited Species to Sea. Vessel owners, operators, and crew are exempt from the requirement at § 679.21(a)(2)(ii), that halibut, as a prohibited species, or halibut parts thereof, be returned to the sea immediately with a minimum of injury, regardless of its condition, for the following specific purpose related to the additional time out of water needed for scientific and data collection purposes of the EFP: to allow vessel crew to collect a tissue sample from halibut selected in the observer's random sample for research purposes. With the exception of the tissue sample collection authorized by the EFP, the designated vessel owners, operators, and crew are not exempt from the requirement that halibut be returned to sea with a minimum of injury, regardless of its condition. Vessel crew must not lift halibut by the caudal peduncle, throw halibut, or otherwise cause additional injury to halibut. Furthermore, the owners, operators, and crew of the vessel participating in EFP fishing are exempt from the requirements of 50 C.F.R. § 679.21(a)(2)(ii) as they pertain to halibut only. Vessel owners, operators, and crew are not exempt from the requirement that prohibited species other than halibut must be returned to the sea immediately, with a minimum of injury, regardless of condition.

H. Administration of the Activities under Exempted Fishing. Management of the EFP fieldwork will be the responsibility of the PI. The PI will:

1. Provide sampling and data recording instructions, data forms, and biological collection tools and storage materials as necessary for fieldwork data collection.
2. Ensure the vessel crew understand and follow the sampling data recording instructions.
3. Coordinate the collection, preservation, and shipment of halibut tissue samples for analysis to the IPHC.

I. Analysis of Results. All data collected under this permit is disclosable to the public in accordance with NOAA confidentiality policy NAO 216-100 and in a manner that is consistent with confidentiality provisions under the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act.

The PI will prepare an interim report that details the number and length distribution of halibut sampled under this EFP. The report will also include a summary of the project objectives, statistical areas fished, vessel used, a detailed description of activities, any problems and successes, and how well the EFP objectives were accomplished. The interim report will be provided to NMFS within 90 days of the receipt of the samples and associated data by the IPHC. The PI will prepare and submit to NMFS upon completion, a final report (which may be delayed if a sufficient sample size is not collected under this EFP) summarizing the results of the genetic analysis of the samples collected under this EFP.

J. Sanctions. A permit holder must immediately notify the NMFS Alaska Regional Office by contacting Bridget Mansfield (907-586-7642) and the owner of the designated vessel fishing under this permit if the vessel is not meeting EFP requirements. Failure of the permit holder, vessel crew, or the owner or operator of the designated vessel fishing under this EFP to comply with the terms and conditions of this permit, non-exempted provisions of 50 CFR parts 600 and 679, the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act, or any other applicable regulations, may be cause for revocation, suspension, or modification of this permit as well as civil or criminal penalties under the Magnuson-Stevens Act.

**APPENDIX A—VESSEL DATA SHEET
EXEMPTED FISHING PERMIT: 2018-02
DESIGNATED VESSEL**

Name of Managing Company: _____

Vessel Name: _____

Federal Permit Number: _____

USCG Official Number: _____

Owner Name: _____

Owner Address: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

Length Overall: _____

Gross Tonnage: _____

Type of Vessel: _____

Homeport: _____

Name, phone number, and email of designated representative: _____

Signature(s) of Owner or Designated Representative(s): _____

Signature

Date signed

Signature

Date signed

The signature(s) above confirm this information, but do not constitute a final commitment to participate in the exempted fishing operations.